

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

/077 W

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R 251404Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8395

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

/AMEMBASSY AMMAN

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 6120

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, XF

SUBJ: INITIAL ISRAELI PRESS REACTION TO PROPOSAL FOR INFORMAL
MULTILATERAL CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EAST

BEGIN SUMMARY: INITIAL ISRAELI PRESS REACTION TO SECRETARY'S
PROPOSAL RE INFORMAL MULTILATERAL CONFERENCE RANGES FROM
CAUTIOUS UNCERTAINTY TO FIRM OPPOSITION. MAIN CRITICISM IS
THAT MULTILATERAL CONTACTS OUTSIDE GENEVA CONFERENCE FRAME-
WORK ARE LIKELY TO BE UNPRODUCTIVE, AND COULD SUBJECT ISRAEL
TO NEW PRESSURES FROM SOVIETS, ARABS, AND POSSIBLY SOME
WESTERN EUROPEANS. IN ADDITION, PRESS REFLECTS CONCERN AT WHAT
IT BELIEVES WAS FAILURE OF U.S. TO INFORM ISRAEL IN ADVANCE
IN MORE THAN PERFUNCTORY MANNER. SOLE FAVORABLE ASPECT, FROM
ISRAELI VIEW, IS U.S. INTENTION TO CONFINE MEMBERSHIP TO STATES,
THUS EXCLUDING PLO. END SUMMARY.

1. ALL EDITORIALS IN SEPT 23 ISRAELI PRESS, IN DISCUSSING
SECRETARY'S UNGA SPEECH PREVIOUS DAY, FOCUSSED ON PROPOSAL
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FOR INFORMAL MULTILATERAL CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

OPINIONS EXPRESSED WERE NEGATIVE IN VARYING DEGREES, WITH FOLLOWING BEING TYPICAL EXAMPLES: DAVAR- "WHAT WILL BE THE CONTRIBUTION OF SUCH A CONFERENCE?... CLOSE TO ZERO, BECAUSE THE PROPOSALS WILL BE IMPRACTICABLE--CERTAINLY FROM ISRAEL'S VIEWPOINT..."; MAARIV- "WHAT'S THE ADVANTAGE...IF THE TIME HAS COME TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT... WHY NOT DO SO WITHIN THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK, IN WHICH THE ARABS HAVE ALREADY PARTICIPATED?"; HATZOFEH - "WHAT KISSINGER PROPOSES IS TO BUILD A 'BACK DOOR' THROUGH WHICH HE WANTS TO INTRODUCE ADDITIONAL FACTORS INTO THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST... ISRAEL MUST REJECT THESE INITIATIVES OUT OF HAND".

2. HAARETZ POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT (PROBABLY GOLAN) SEPT 24 REPORTS THAT "GOVERNMENT CIRCLES " ARE ANGRY BOTH ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL AND ABOUT THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS BROUGHT TO ISRAEL'S ATTENTION. RE SUBSTANCE, IT IS POINTED OUT THAT IN PAST SECRETARY HAD BEEN OPPOSED TO INCLUSION OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN SUCH A CONFERENCE, WHICH THE WRITER TERMS THE "CLEAR INTENTION" OF THE NEW PROPOSAL. APPARENT CHANGE IN VIEWS IS REPORTEDLY SEEN IN JERUSALEM " AS AN ATTEMPT TO EXERT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS 'OF HER OWN GOOD WILL' IN ORDER TO AVOID INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON HER TO RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS". CONCERNING THE MODALITIES OF THE PROPOSAL, HAARETZ CORRESPONDENT CITES "CIRCLES IN JERUSALEM" AS SAYING THAT "ACCORDING TO THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT" THERE SHOULD BE "FULL COORDINATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE US CONCERNING POLITICAL MOVES". THEREFORE, THE US WAS "DUTY-BOUND TO CONSULT ISRAEL IN ADVANCE OR AT LEAST TO INFORM THE GOVERNMENT" OF SUCH A PROPOSAL.

3. DAVAR (BARNEA, FROM WASHINGTON) SAYS THAT ACCORDING TO US SOURCES THE PROPOSAL "WAS MAINLY A TRIAL BALLON MEANT TO EXAMINE THE REACTION OF SYRIA, ISRAEL, AND THE SOVIET UNION". HE ADDS THAT THE US BELIEVES THAT THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD HAVE A FORMAL ROLE IN TALKS CONCERNING THE GOLAN, IN VIEW OF THE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SYRIA AND THE RESULTING RUSSIAN ABILITY TO FOIL A AGREEMENT. BARNEA ALSO ASSERTS THAT THE SECRETARY HAS PROPOSED

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AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE IN ORDER TO CIRCUMVENT THE QUESTION OF PLO PARTICIPATION, SINCE "THE US PROMISED ISRAEL" THAT THE PLO WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE GENEVA TALKS UNTIL IT RECOGNIZED ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND AGREED TO UNSC RESOLUTION 224 AND 338. HE ADDS THAT "US OFFICIALS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR" THAT THE PLO WOULD LIKewise NOT BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE AT AN INFORMAL CONFERENCE.

4. DAVAR (ESHED) ALSO POINTS OUT THAT "THERE WILL NOT BE ANY GREAT ENTHUSIASM ON THE PART OF ISRAEL FOR THE PARTICIPATION IN A MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE OF BRITAIN AND FRANCE". HOWEVER, ESHED ADDS, "THE AMERICANS ARE ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES WITH CONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF JORDAN WITHOUT THE PLO...".

5. MOST PAPERS STRESS THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS REFRAINED FROM FORMULATING A POSITION TOWARD THE PROPOSAL UNTIL FONMIN ALLON CAN OBTAIN FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS FROM THE SECRETARY. HAARETZ SEPT 25 EDITORIAL EXPRESSES THE FEELING THAT "JERUSALEM DOES NOT EXACTLY KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE IDEA, OR TO WHAT DEGREE KISSINGER HIMSELF IS COMMITTED TO IT, OR WHO IS SUPPOSED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CONFERENCE AND WHAT IT IS TO DEAL WITH..." EDITORIAL THEN WONDERS WHY US BELIEVES THAT "MANY COOKS MIGHT IMPROVE THE BROTH" TODAY, WHEN IT WAS OPPOSED TO MULTILATERAL APPROACH IN THE PAST.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, SPEECHES, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV06120
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750333-0698
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750916/aaaaanus.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2003 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2004 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INITIAL ISRAELI PRESS REACTION TO PROPOSAL FOR INFORMAL MULTILATERAL CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EAST
TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, XF, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006